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Abstract of the Disclosure

In conjunction with the dial-up public telephone system, voice quality lines carry videophone signals for monitoring a multitude of locations from at least one central station for use in a variety of applications, such as for security, surveillance, quality control and inspection, regulation of food and/or other standards in food-related and other facilities, market research, remote monitoring of deposit and withdrawal of funds at bank vaults, grocery chains, convenience stores, and the like. At the central station, telephonic interface apparatus is actuated by a control unit to selectively accomplish a telephonic connection with a remote location. Displays include the scene at the remote location and related graphic data. During routine operation, remote locations are displayed in sequence to at least one operator. Such operation may be interrupted either from a remote location or central station in the event of an urgency. In such an event, the concerned scrutiny location is displayed for further communication involving status, camera selection, camera configuration, audio, video and so on. Incoming calls from scrutiny stations imply an urgent situation for immediate display. The called number, by dialed number identification system (DNIS) may indicate the status while the calling number identifies the location by automatic number identification (ANI) signals. Alternative signalling and code techniques afford flexible operation as with respect to various graphic and status indications available for displays.